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IN OTHER NEWS

Employers advised to be mindful of drink driving changes

*Nick Walker, Newstalk ZB
November 26, 2014, 6:17 am*

Lower blood alcohol limits could be as much a problem for employers as for those who are driving.

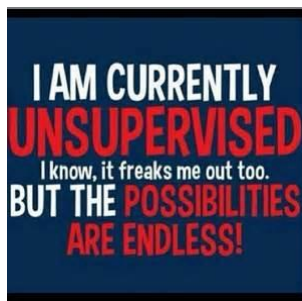
The driving limit will almost halve on Monday, while there's also a move for employers to be responsible if drink drivers who crash, have come from a work function.

While that's not expected to be in place until next year, Workbase CEO Katherine Percy says employers need to adapt now, starting with work Christmas parties.

"If you really are anticipating that your employees will want to let their hair down then you do need to make prior arrangements about how they're going to get home and provide transport options."

The move comes amidst plans to hold employers accountable if drunk drivers

Supervision



We see in the latest issue of the Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board Info Brief that Supervision is discussed. Here are a couple of paragraphs from the item by the Chairman of the Board Peter Jackson:

"Quite simply, the supervisor is responsible for the quality of the work

carried out by the people supervised and that work must be carried out under the control and direction of the supervisor. A supervisor can be held accountable for work that does not meet required competence standards"

"Poor supervision can have a significant impact on public health and safety. As much care and attention needs to be given to supervision as is given to work that is carried out personally by a supervisor. I am sure that most supervisors carry out their responsibilities very well, but some don't and it is to them that this message is directed"

Yes a lot of responsibility has been placed on supervisors and supervisors are being held accountable more than ever - so where did all these responsibilities come from? We believe it all started around 1976 when two levels of registration were introduced, these being registered plumber, gasfitter and drainlayer and Craftsman plumber and gasfitter.

Along with the inception of the Industry Training Organisations, the two systems reduced the standard of training and moved the emphasis of accountability on to the Craftsman, (now Certifiers), but didn't provide those Craftsman with any additional training required to perform the necessary functions around supervision. Those initial people had to rely on their experience, knowledge and skill.

Apprentice training was reduced, and after registration those newly qualified tradespeople were abandoned by the ITO and left to find their own way through to Craftsman level. This was all about money - there was no payment from the government for training after the initial registration. Whilst all this was going on the Board placed more and more responsibilities on the Craftsman.

In short, we went from a system of well trained tradespeople with one qualification - that being "Registered Plumber Gasfitter or Drainlayer", where everyone was responsible for their OWN work, to what we have now, a system that doesn't train but expects those who haven't received proper training themselves to train new apprentices. It's a system that puts responsibility on to the supervisor who now carries others - it's a "Lazy System" in our opinion, all stick and no carrot.

who are involved in crashes have come from staff functions.

Ms Percy says while that won't come into place until next year, now is the best time to prepare.

"There is a lot employers can do in terms of advising employees about the new law of educating people about safe drinking, providing lots of non-alcoholic drinks."

Ed

What sort of garbage is this?

Whatever happened to common sense and individuals being responsible for their own actions?

What next – are employers going to have to sit in the vehicle with the driver to ensure they don't speed or run a red light?

If an individual is qualified to drive and be issued with a driver's license then they are responsible for their actions not the employer.

This is just more responsibility on supervisors and employers.

What next – if employers and supervisors are held responsible then shouldn't bar owners also be held responsible for the drink drivers?

The Government are demanding more and more from some of the most productive people in society, being us, and it's simply so they can be seen to be doing the right thing and live up to promises they have made.

Eventually they will push us all too far.

Policy Update

The Board announced in the Info Brief that the Board's prosecutions policy has

We believe supervisors are now being punished for the failings of the Government, the Board and the ITO, and the new qualification recommendations that have been put to the New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA) aren't going to help at all.

Supervision is the problem created by the qualification regime and the lack of training at apprentice level. We have been singing this song for a long, long time – but apart from our members no one wants to know.

The Federation isn't about lowering the standards - it's about raising them. Shouldn't there be one qualification - so that when you qualify you are responsible for your own work. Wouldn't that ensure that when the Board allocated you your registration upon completion you were responsible and accountable for your own actions? There would be nowhere to hide, no excuses and no laying the blame.

There needs to be a total rethink of our industry from training to the way it is regulated but we are going to have to fight for that as the Government make the rules and then appoint muppets and puppets to enforce their rules. If you want a prime example of poor supervision and accountability look at the Government and the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board – quite simply a joke! (But not a funny one!)

The group of people who often speak against the one qualification are some employers who want to keep labour costs low. They want less certifiers and more licensed and exemption holders – they can't leave easily because they need to work under a "certifier". Often the supervision they get is inadequate – and they are expected to do the job themselves, with someone else signing it off. Good employers want to encourage their staff to get as qualified as possible – these people aren't scared of a longer apprenticeship and a fully qualified staff.

Second Nature

Ignoring the industry has become second nature to the Board and Government and now most of their time is spent justifying their decisions and forcing implementation of their terms and conditions of licensing, policies and procedures.

They say that those opposing them are costing the industry money and slowing down the processes but we all know they were told four years ago by the Auditor General that they must get the support of the industry and they have failed to do so.

How many times have they, in our opinion, acted in bad faith towards the industry or not taken reasonable care? The regulation of the industry over the last 15 years has got worse and more expensive. A once proud industry has been reduced to a wanting bureaucratic mess.

Now it's not just us saying this – we are hearing from those outside the Federation that they too have had enough of the excessive licensing costs and the rather ridiculous "buying of points" scheme that the Board are so wedded to.

recently been updated. View the updated version at www.pgdb.co.nz under the legislation section.

Ed:

For those that tried to view this document you may have noticed the link wasn't working.

We did the right thing and notified the Board that they had another system failure.

We note there is now access to the policy.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

I read with interest the article on the Best Practice Regulation Model. It doesn't surprise me that it doesn't apply to our industry as we are treated like the plague.

There have been so many failures in the regulation and governance of our industry that no one wants a bar of anything regarding the Plumbing Gasfitting and Drainlaying industry.

People seem to forget the good that we do every day that we go to work. They just turn on their taps, gas stoves and flush their toilets and expect everything to work.

And when it doesn't they scream from the highest hill for help and once it is all good again they don't want to pay. We would have to be one of the most underappreciated trades in the country.

Keep up your good work as one day there will be appreciation for us.

Dear Editor

I read your newsletter with great anticipation each week. You and your team are doing

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The complaint about Continuing Professional Development which was laid with the Ombudsman over 16 months ago is still on the go but we have been informed there will be a final opinion before Christmas.

The Regulation Review Committee have decided that as they are not required to carry on with the work schedule of the previous government and that they will take no action on our complaint about CPD. This isn't surprising and adds to their loss of credibility – so much for them being a part of Government to protect the public.

Licensing

Only three months until its time renew our licenses so we ask if this is going to be a smooth process - or is there possibly going to be more protest action? The Board surpluses are beyond what the Government require – and yet they are not looking to reduce licensing fees in 2015. This simply isn't good enough. Saying they are going to "consult" is simply delaying tactics while they continue on their snatch and grab regime. This Board should be ashamed of the way they treat the industry in regards to fees. Deeply ashamed!

Fees and terms and conditions of licensing will be the same as last year as the Board are consulting on fees etc next year but not before licensing 2015.

Perhaps injunction action should be taken regarding licensing and CPD. That would require going to court and getting a court order requiring the Board to refrain from doing a particular act, or to do a particular act. Anything is possible but we have to make it happen. What do you think –are you willing to put your hand in your pocket to contribute to the cost of an injunction?

From the Media

New online tool for small business

National Party, Fuseworks November 26, 2014, 10:38 am

Small Business Minister Craig Foss today welcomed the release of a new online tool to help small and medium-sized businesses understand the cost of employing staff.

The tool, developed by Business.govt.nz at the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, estimates the fixed and discretionary costs of hiring new staff.

Fixed costs include salary, ACC levies and KiwiSaver. Discretionary costs include recruitment, training and office equipment.

"The Employee Cost Calculator is designed to help small and medium-sized businesses make confident hiring decisions based on realistic and reliable projections," Mr Foss says.

The Employee Cost Calculator supports the Better for Business -

a great job uncovering information that the Board would rather stay hidden in a cupboard. What amazes me is that the Minister has not called for the heads of this current Board given the amount of negative traffic he must get about them.

Word on the street is that as soon as anyone in Parliament hears the words "Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board" they head for the hills as they know that there will be plenty of baggage to follow.

If this is really the case, then why doesn't someone in the seat of power call them out for their failings? It's time that accountability meant accountability – mind you the track record of this Govt for accountability isn't too great is it?

ED:

We can't argue with either letters to the Editor. It's a sorry state of affairs that appears is being ignored by the Government.

There has been so much deceit that none of them know the truth anymore and none of them have the guts to stop the rot and take positive action.

Result 9 programme, which is transforming the public sector to make it easier for businesses to interact with Government.

"Business.govt.nz packages Government information in a way that makes sense to business. It provides information, advice and a variety of tools to help businesses succeed," Mr Foss says.

For more information visit:

www.business.govt.nz/employeecostcalculator

ED:

Just be aware your need to have a fairly modern browser to be able to use the calculator. We had a go and put in figures based on \$24.00 an hour and were quite shocked by the results. For some it would help with planning and for others it would totally discourage them from employing staff.

Final Fellow Practitioner for the year.

Another year has passed and a lot of issues still remain in the industry for us to deal with.

We will be back next year to fight the fight and we want you here beside us. We are at that time of the year when there are functions to attend so we ask you act responsibly and look after the young ones in the industry.

Next week will be the final Fellow Practitioner for the year, unless something absolutely outstanding happens, so if you want to have a final say then send it to us ready for next week.

The Final Word



I went to a function on Saturday and made a real animal of myself.

This photo was sent to me telling me that even animals get hangovers so that blows another theory.

I was told it looks like me – the weight may be the same but I don't have that much hair.

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